

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1451

Establishing the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the House of
Representatives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

Mr. MCGOVERN (for himself, Mr. WOLF, Mr. BERMAN, and Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Establishing the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
in the House of Representatives.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “Tom Lantos
4 Human Rights Commission Establishment Resolution”.

5 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS**
6 **COMMISSION.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
8 House of Representatives the Tom Lantos Human Rights
9 Commission (hereafter in this resolution referred to as the
10 “Commission”), which shall promote and advocate in a

1 nonpartisan manner, both within and outside of Congress,
2 internationally recognized human rights norms as en-
3 shrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
4 and other relevant international human rights instruments
5 by carrying out the following activities:

6 (1) Developing congressional strategies to pro-
7 mote, defend, and advocate internationally recog-
8 nized human rights norms reflecting the role and re-
9 sponsibilities of the Congress.

10 (2) Raising greater awareness among Members
11 of the House of Representatives, their staffs, and
12 the public regarding international human rights vio-
13 lations and developments.

14 (3) Providing Members and staff with expert
15 human rights advice and information and by sup-
16 porting entities of Congress in their work on human
17 rights issues.

18 (4) Advocating on behalf of individuals and en-
19 tities whose internationally recognized human rights
20 have been violated or are in danger of being violated.

21 (5) Collaborating closely with other professional
22 staff members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

23 (6) Collaborating closely with the President,
24 other officials of the executive branch, and recog-
25 nized national and international human rights enti-

1 ties and nongovernmental organizations in pro-
2 moting human rights initiatives within Congress.

3 (7) Encouraging and supporting Members, es-
4 pecially Members who have been recently elected to
5 the House, to become active in supporting human
6 rights issues so that the United States will continue
7 to be recognized throughout the world as a leader in
8 the defense of internationally recognized human
9 rights norms.

10 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—Any Member of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives may join the Commission by submitting a
12 written statement to that effect to the co-chairs of the
13 Commission.

14 (c) RELATIONSHIP WITH SENATE.—In carrying out
15 its activities, the Commission is encouraged to establish
16 a cooperative working relationship with Members and
17 other entities of the Senate, and to invite Members and
18 other entities of the Senate to work cooperatively with the
19 Commission to promote human rights.

20 (d) DEFINITION.—In this resolution, the term “Mem-
21 ber of the House of Representatives” includes a Delegate
22 or Resident Commissioner to the Congress.

1 **SEC. 3. CO-CHAIRS OF THE COMMISSION.**

2 (a) APPOINTMENT.—Two members of the Commis-
3 sion shall be appointed to serve as co-chairs of the Com-
4 mission as follows:

5 (1) One member shall be appointed by the
6 Speaker of the House of Representatives after con-
7 sultation with the Chairman of the Committee on
8 Foreign Affairs.

9 (2) One member shall be appointed by the mi-
10 nority leader of the House of Representatives after
11 consultation with the ranking minority member of
12 the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

13 (b) TERM OF SERVICE.—A member's term as co-
14 chair of the Commission shall continue throughout the
15 Congress during which the member is appointed as a co-
16 chair under this section until the member leaves the Com-
17 mission, resigns from the position of co-chair, or is re-
18 moved pursuant to subsection (c).

19 (c) REMOVAL.—The co-chair appointed pursuant to
20 subsection (a)(1) may be removed by the Speaker after
21 consultation with the Chairman of the Committee on For-
22 eign Affairs, and the co-chair appointed pursuant to sub-
23 section (a)(2) may be removed by the minority leader after
24 consultation with the ranking minority member of the
25 Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1 (d) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the position of any of
2 the co-chairs of the Commission shall be filled in the same
3 manner in which the original appointment was made.

4 (e) DUTIES.—The co-chairs shall be responsible for
5 setting the general agenda of the Commission.

6 **SEC. 4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall have an
8 Executive Committee which shall consist of 8 members of
9 the Commission equally divided between members of the
10 majority and minority parties selected jointly by the co-
11 chairs of the Commission with the approval of the Speaker
12 of the House of Representatives and the minority leader
13 of the House of Representatives.

14 (b) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the membership of the
15 Executive Committee shall be filled in the same manner
16 in which the original selection was made.

17 **SEC. 5. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.**

18 (a) USE OF COMMITTEE STAFF AND RESOURCES.—
19 Subject to subsection (b), the Commission shall carry out
20 its duties using the staff and resources of the Committee
21 on Foreign Affairs, including the use of consultants or
22 temporary employees, such as individuals with expertise
23 in human rights issues, related legislative matters, and
24 technology systems management, as appropriate.

25 (b) REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF.—

1 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The staff of the Com-
2 mittee on Foreign Affairs who may be used by the
3 Commission under subsection (a) to carry out its du-
4 ties shall be professional staff members of the
5 Committee who are appointed for this purpose by
6 the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,
7 of whom half of the full-time equivalent positions
8 shall be appointed from among a list of individuals
9 presented to the Chairman of the Committee by the
10 co-chair appointed pursuant to section 3(a)(1) and
11 half of the full-time equivalent positions shall be ap-
12 pointed from among a list of individuals presented to
13 the Chairman of the Committee by the co-chair ap-
14 pointed pursuant to section 3(a)(2).

15 (2) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINATION OF
16 NUMBER OF COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS.—Any
17 professional staff member of the Committee on For-
18 eign Affairs who is used by the Commission to carry
19 out its duties on a full-time basis shall not be in-
20 cluded in determining the number of professional
21 staff members of the Committee under subpara-
22 graphs (1) and (2) of clause 9(a) of rule X of the
23 Rules of the House of Representatives.

1 **SEC. 6. OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES.**

2 (a) BYLAWS.—The Commission shall adopt and pub-
3 lish such bylaws to govern its organization and operation
4 (including the duties of the Executive Committee) as it
5 considers appropriate, subject to the applicable Rules of
6 the House of Representatives.

7 (b) NO LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY.—The Commission
8 shall not have legislative jurisdiction and shall have no au-
9 thority to take legislative action on any bill or resolution.

10 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 In addition to any other amounts made available for
12 salaries and expenses of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
13 of the House of Representatives during a Congress, there
14 are authorized to be appropriated from the applicable ac-
15 counts of the House of Representatives such sums as may
16 be necessary for the Committee to provide staff and re-
17 sources for the Commission pursuant to section 5.

18 **SEC. 8. TRANSITION FOR CURRENT MEMBERS OF CON-**
19 **GRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS.**

20 For purposes of this resolution—

21 (1) each Member of the House of Representa-
22 tives who is a member of the Congressional Human
23 Rights Caucus as of the date of the adoption of this
24 resolution shall be deemed to have joined the Com-
25 mission; and

1 (2) the 2 Members of the House of Representa-
2 tives who are the co-chairs of the Congressional
3 Human Rights Caucus as of the date of the adop-
4 tion of this resolution shall be deemed to have been
5 appointed as co-chairs of the Commission.

○